

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 105

By Fincher

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Ronald Johnson, United States Army, Retired.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans continue this time-honored tradition of volunteerism through service in the Armed Forces, including the United States Army; sadly, many of these honored defenders of our nation and its liberties have fallen while serving their country throughout its history; and

WHEREAS, on January 23, 2007, Ronald Johnson, United States Army, Retired, died in a helicopter crash while performing his duties as a pilot in Baghdad, Iraq; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson, part of a team that was supporting the United States Department of State's reconstruction efforts in Iraq, was at the time of his death courageously endeavoring to help fellow team members escort a Department of State motorcade that was in peril; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson was no stranger to the risks of serving his country; though no longer a member of the United States Army at the time of his death, he had valiantly fought and been wounded in combat during Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada in 1983, for which he was awarded the Combat Infantry Men's Badge and the Purple Heart; he also saw combat in Operation Desert Storm; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson's other decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Nation Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Southeast Asia Service Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, Humanitarian Service Medal, Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO

Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Valorous Unit Award, Combat Infantry Badge, Expert Infantry Badge, Senior Army Aviator Badge, and Master Parachutist Badge with Bronze Star and Ranger Tab; and

WHEREAS, a beloved son, father, and brother, Ron Johnson was born in Cookeville to Frances Harris Johnson and the late Solon Gerald Johnson; he graduated from Upperman High School in Cookeville in 1979 before joining the Army in 1981; and

WHEREAS, Ron Johnson served for 20 years in the United States Army, attaining the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 3; he served as a pilot in Task Force 160, the most elite special operations aviation unit in the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, he was a graduate of the Ranger School, one of the most challenging leadership military schools in the United States Armed Forces, and served in the 75th Ranger Regiment; Mr. Johnson has been nominated for induction into the prestigious Ranger Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, in the four years prior to his death, Mr. Johnson worked as a helicopter pilot at Blackwater Securities; though not a member of the Army anymore, he still championed the efforts of the United States to rebuild a war-torn and weary country; and

WHEREAS, Ronald Johnson's dedication to excellence in all of his efforts, including his service in the military and his love of his family, fellow soldiers, colleagues, and country, exemplified in his sacrifice of life itself in defense of all that he held dear, stands as an enduring example of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, Ronald Johnson is survived by his mother, Frances Harris Johnson; two sons, Kyle J. and Ryan G. Johnson; his sister, Mary R. Brown; his brother, Randy Johnson; and the mother of his children, Darcie E. Johnson; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson was preceded in death by his father, Mr. Solon Johnson, as well as his grandparents, Jessie L. And Clio Barnes Harris and Joe and Willie Russell Johnson; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are proud to join with the United States Army and the citizens of Cookeville, the State of Tennessee, and the United States of America in honoring a fallen son; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor the memory of Cookeville native Ronald Johnson, United States Army, Retired, reflecting upon his heroic sacrifice of his life and expressing to his family our sorrow for their loss and our gratitude for Mr. Johnson's commitment to the cause of freedom.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.